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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tripoli, Libya

March 27 / 1969

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

John F. Root, Esquire  
Country Director for Northern  
African Affairs  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear John:

Embassy Airgram A-72 forwards a conversation of significance which I had with the Crown Prince on March 20.

It has, as you well know, been our objective to try to move away from the very precise earlier commitments to assist the Crown Prince at the time of his succession. Changes in the Libyan scene have made this kind of help less and less feasible and changes at home have decreased the likelihood that we would render special help of the kind contemplated. At the same time we have wished to avoid creating a feeling in the Crown Prince that we no longer support him for the succession.

Through various contacts we have been moving to emphasize that the Crown Prince and his followers must bear the major responsibility for a successful succession.

Following on the very helpful guidance on this matter in which you collaborated, I took the opportunity during an audience on March 20 to spell out our position directly to the Prince. The changes which sometimes take place in emphases and meaning when such messages are transmitted indirectly made it in my view desirable that our views be conveyed directly to the Prince. I came away with a feeling that he had read the message and that he now understands and accepts the fact that his accession to the throne depends upon internal rather than external factors.

Even though we need no longer consider our precise commitments of an earlier day, I feel that it remains important to us to keep in touch with the Prince through the channel which we have used now for many years. This gives us a further insight into his thinking and provides a link which could assist materially in the preservation of our major interest in Libya once he accedes to the throne.

(Signed) David

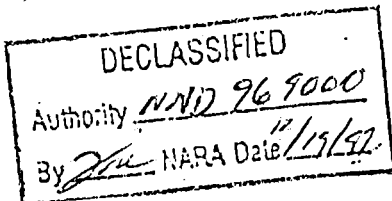
David D. Henderson  
American Ambassador

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The conversation reported in the airgram and reports I have had of contacts with him by other diplomats suggest a very definite improvement in the Prince's awareness of his position and his problems. We also have the feeling that he is now for the first time seeking to widen the circle of his own supporters. The Moroccans and the Tunisians are both making special efforts both in Libya and in connection with his forthcoming visits to the Maghreb states. Morocco and Tunisia now for the first time since my arrival here have first class Ambassadors in Libya, who are making relations with the Crown Prince one of their special objectives. I think we can take some of the credit for this development since we have stressed to both governments on many occasions the importance of their representation in Libya.

Sincerely,

David D. Newsom  
American Ambassador